

Can You Hear Me? by richiegayzier

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Summary:

4 months later, and Mike still hasn't given up on her. He feels like he's the only one. He feels isolated. He feels insane. But he still can't let her go. It's the only thing keeping him in one piece... Moving FanFic about everyone's life post-El, and how you should at least listen to the crazy person. They might not be crazy after all...

1. Gone

He ran fast. Faster than should be humanly possible. Yet he kept begging his legs to go quicker, quicker, quicker. This speed may be fast for him, but he was sure it could go faster. He stopped abruptly when he saw the road. Silence. It'd stopped chasing him. But why? That's when he heard it. The piercing scream for help. No. For him. "Mike!" The voice was filled with fear, with terror. Mike wanted to run to her. He had to save her. But he just stayed there. He didn't move, much as he wanted to. His mouth opened, and he screamed her name silently. Her voice grew weaker, more pained and desperate. "Mike. Please."

He sat bolt upright in a cold sweat. The nightmares were becoming more and more frequent. Some of them weren't even nightmares, more like projections of his thoughts, but they were worse. Worse because it was reality. With nightmares, they were over once he woke up. With reality, he couldn't ever escape.

2. 131 days since

Summary for the Chapter:

Mike and Nancy make a discovery that almost sends him spiralling out of control.

Forgive me for putting him through pain. I am a terrible person.

It had been 4 months and 10 days since. Since Will came back. Since she went missing. Since he had kissed her. And as each day went by, the pain of his loss grew stronger, deeper, more piercing. His mother grew increasingly worried about him. He had always been a thin boy, but now he'd stopped eating. Barely slept for fear of the nightmares. He built a wall around himself, blocking out his parents.

There were very few people that he liked, and even less people that he trusted. Dustin, Lucas and Will tried to carry on like normal with him. It was an unspoken rule not to mention her name, or the Upside Down. It was all too painful for him (The place also still sent shivers down Will's spine), and for them to see their friend this upset. Nancy was always by his side when he had the nightmares. She understood more than anyone else. She had lost someone she loved to the demogorgan too. But it was still different. Barb was dead, Nancy had that closure at least. Mike had no idea where she was, or whether she was alive. Yet he felt it, in his stomach. Felt her existence carrying on. That was enough proof for him.

School was terrible. His grades dropped dramatically. He skipped his classes. He isolated himself from the other kids to the HeathKit, hoping to reach her. When he wasn't there, he was in detention. When Troy started making fun of her, Mike attacked him. Literally attacked him. Troy went home with a broken nose, a black eye and a busted lip. The teachers didn't know what to do with Mike. He received a suspension, but that just gave him time to go crazy looking for her. It was Hopper who discovered his secret, when he found him

curled up, shivering at the foot of a tree, crying, saying her name over and over like a crazy person. He'd been there for a good few hours and the chief had to fetch the others from school to calm him. He wasn't the same. He didn't care. The only thing he cared about was her. And until he found her... Nothing was going to change.

It was that night during dinner that the final twig snapped. He kept his head bowed over his plate and made no attempt to interact with anyone. "I've had enough of this." Mrs Wheeler said abruptly. Her husband looked downright confused and surprised at her outburst, and Nancy gave her a glare telling her to leave him be. He and Holly didn't stop what they were doing, she eating her meatloaf and him ignoring his mothers voice. "Michael Wheeler, you're going to eat your meatloaf and act like a part of this family." She awaited a response. She didn't receive one. "Now." Nancy was quick to Mike's defence.

"Mom," she started, "Just leav-"

"No Nancy. You're not his mother. It's been Four Months for goodness sake, and he's still moping around about some girl he knew for a week!" That struck a nerve.

"She's not 'Some girl'!" He shouted, standing up from the table and thundering down to the basement. Nancy shot her mother a cold look. "Great job mom." She walked away from her half eaten meal. "Where are you going?" Mrs Wheeler asked with a roll of her eyes. Nancy shot back without missing a beat. "I'm going to check on Mike. He needs someone who actually cares about his feelings." She was half way down the stairs before her mom could say another word. Karen sat, gobsmacked. She looked to Mr Wheeler for help, but when he gave her a look, she grew angry. "How's your meatloaf Ted?" She huffed, before stalking away from the table. He yelled back. "What did I do this time?"

In the basement, Nancy found her little brother packing a backpack with clothes, blankets, torches, a wrist rocket and his radio. "What's

all this for?" She asked, though she felt she already knew his answer. "I have to find her." He said flatly. His voice was usually like that nowadays, flat and emotionless. It scared Nancy how much he'd changed in the past 4 months. Where was the happy, nerdy boy who hung out in the basement playing D&D for 10 hours with his equally as nerdy best friends? "Yeah, I know, but why don't you just pack in the morning? And we'll go together?" Mike scoffed.

"You think I'm waiting till morning?"

"What, you want to go now?" Nancy asked in surprise. She had thought that he would at least wait till the morning. "Yeah Nancy, now. And I don't care what you say." She thought for a moment. Then she ran up the stairs and quickly returned with the phone. "I'm coming with you," she said "And I don't care what you say." Mike gave her a rare smile, and she gratefully mirrored one back. "One condition. We borrow Jonathan's car. No way am I going into the woods at 7 o'clock at night in this cold."

"Deal," he agreed "but I'm bringing my bike. I'm pretty sure his car can't go through the forest."

Nancy went upstairs to call Jonathan. Mike looked around the room, every time avoiding her bed, until eventually his eyes settled onto it like glue. He really didn't want to look for her with anyone else. He'd rather be alone. They wouldn't be like Mike, willing to do ANYTHING to get her back. But, he thought, if it had to be anyone, he was glad it was Nancy. She'd be willing to take some risks, especially after losing Barb. Plus, his sister was kind of a badass now. She knew the most about the monster, apart from... He stopped himself. Thinking about her was dangerous. Made him more likely to breakdown in tears. And if that happened, Nancy just wouldn't let him go. And he needed to go. Desperately.

His elder sister came down a few minutes later with an exasperated look on her face. "He won't let me take his car." She announced, apology in her eyes.

"What?! Why?" Mike was annoyed at Jonathan. That mouth breather.

"Well... Okay, he *will* let us borrow it... But he wants to come. Last time we went in search of the demogorgan..." Her voice trailed off. Mike understood. Nancy had been trapped in the Upside Down (even if only for, what, 10 minutes?). Jonathan had been there, and while she was okay now, he was still protective of her. Wouldn't let her do anything dangerous without him there. "Nancy. I get it. But if we have no car in 10 minutes, you're either walking, or I'm going alone. Okay?" She was already on the phone to Jonathan by the time he got to 'I'm'. "Jonathan, I need the car. No, you're not coming. You don't need to. I'm not looking for the monster, idiot. I'm looking for her. You know who she is Jonathan! Not her. Yeah. No, seriously, you don't understand. I'm going with Mike, and you know I'm not letting him go out there alone. If you don't give me the car, I'll just walk. Okay, okay! Great. Thanks, really appreciate it." She hung up, flashing Mike a grin.

"Honestly Nancy," he said with a satisfied grin "that boy's loves you soooo much."

5 minutes later, Jonathan was outside the house in his car. Mike and Nancy had to go through the basement door for fear of getting caught. "If you need us, use Will's radio, but do not tell him why." Mike said to Jonathan "Just tell him you need to speak to Nancy and her phones broke. He'll get it." A smug smile crept across his face. Nancy and Jonathan both looked to the floor, blushing. "Thanks again." She said.

The forest was dark and the rain was pouring heavily. Mikes breath caught. It was... Exactly like the first night. The night they went looking for Will and came home with a stranger. If they'd have known what a difference she'd make to their life, maybe things would have been different. Maybe they wouldn't have called her a weirdo. Wouldn't have thought she was strange. But she was strange. Sure, strange things had happened but, he thought, the strangest part was the friend they made along the way...

It was almost 12 o'clock by the time the pair got home. Nancy's arms were wrapped around Mike. He didn't say a word. He stayed as if he'd found a dead body, silent, distraught, and shaking. They hadn't found her. He hadn't really expected to. It was more what they had found that had unsettled him. Pale pink shreds of cloth. Pale pink shreds of cloth exactly like the dress she'd been wearing. Spattered with blood. A blue jacket. A blue jacket exactly like the one she'd been wearing. Spattered with blood. A part empty box of Eggos. Spattered. With. Blood. And they were all right next to the fence. The fence separating the Lab from the rest of Hawkins. That was all Mike could handle. He had ran, ran to nowhere, ran to anywhere, anywhere that wasn't there. When Nancy had found him, he'd been standing at the edge of the cliff that he'd jumped off less than 5 months ago. In his mind he knew he was crazy, but some part of him felt that if he jumped, she'd catch him like she did that day in November, no matter where she was. He was about to, but he couldn't. Couldn't do that to Nancy. So he sat silently. Then screamed. Screamed so loud the below water slightly rippled. Screamed so loud the sleeping birds flew from their trees. Chief Hopper probably would have heard it. And the Byers. Probably even his own parents. And when Nancy saw him, it broke her heart to see her little brother in pieces.

Her parents were in bed, probably because before they left, she had told them that Mike was asleep in the basement and that she was going to sleep down there with him to keep him company, so not to come down there unless they heard screaming. Thank god they'd listened to her. Mike collapsed into the missing girl's bed the minute she had closed the basement door, and she decided that it was probably best if she did stay down there after all. He was a heartbroken mess, and she was scared that he might do something bad. Like tear the basement to shreds, or run away. Like someone had once told her, only love makes you that crazy. And deep down, she knew he would probably do something stupid for that girl.

"Nancy?" He said out of the blue. She had thought that he was asleep.

"Yeah?"

"Do you... Do you think... Do you think she's mad at me? That I didn't find her? That I couldn't save her from the bad men?" He just kept on breaking her heart, this boy.

"Mike. She'd never be mad at you." She assured him "You both had a special connection. She's probably not even in that place. She maybe just realised where she was, panicked, and ran away and dropped her eggos and your jacket. And then she probably caught her dress on a branch. She won't be in trouble. She's brave. She can look after herself. Don't blame yourself." Nancy looked into her brother's brown eyes. They were sleepy and sad.

"B-but... I kissed her Nancy. I promised I'd take her to the snow ball." His throat choked up, and it was clear he was fighting back tears. "I promised her she'd be safe. That she'd have a real bed. That you'd be her sister." He said the last sentence meekly. It warmed Nancy's heart and at the same time ripped it to pieces. "Friends keep their word. They never break a promise. But I broke mine. And... She's gone." She didn't know what to say. Here was a 12-year-old, shattered into a thousand pieces, yet wise beyond his years. "Mike," she said eventually, although by now he was asleep "she's going to be okay. We'll find her. I promise."

Notes for the Chapter:

A/N Like I said, this chapter is waaay longer than the first one. I'll admit that this is pretty bad (I wrote it like a month ago). Trust me, they get better as the story progresses. I think.

3. 132 days since

Summary for the Chapter:

A strange call has Lucas convinced that Mike isn't crazy. The others, however, aren't so sure...

Lucas looked at his clock. 9:30. He got dressed almost straight away, and ran down the stairs for breakfast, before getting on his bike and heading over to Mike's house. 5 months ago, he'd probably still be in bed now. When he did wake up, he'd radio everyone before he dared step out of his room. He'd always be slow eating his breakfast, and was sometimes the last to arrive at whoever's house. But a lot can change in 5 months. And a lot had.

Lucas had always had a tough life. Being the only black kid at Hawkins Middle School meant he was prone to racial bullying. Troy, the biggest jerk, called him midnight. It never really bothered him though. His best friends, Dustin Henderson, Will Byers and Mike Wheeler all got bullied by Troy too, and it was nice to know you weren't going through it alone. But all that looked harmless compared to what Mike was going through right now. Ever since it happened, he hadn't been himself. What started off as a few nightmares had quickly become the beginning of his total destruction. So now, every Saturday, Dustin and Will would bike over to Mike's for 10:30, while he was always there at 10. If they didn't, anything could happen.

When Lucas let himself into the basement, Nancy was there, watching over her sleeping brother. "If he starts to look like he's having a nightmare, wake him up. He's had a really rough night." She told him. When Lucas saw her face, her eyes were ringed red. "What happened?" He inquired, slight panic in his voice. Mike usually slept in his bedroom, and waited for the boys to arrive downstairs. Nancy was certainly never there by the time they got there. Something was wrong. Very wrong. "Ask Mike, not me. If he wants to tell you, he

will." She snapped suddenly, something she only did if worried. And with that, she carried herself up the stairs.

Looking around the room, Lucas had no idea what to think. He saw a familiar looking blue denim jacket on the floor underneath a dirty box of Eggos. The clothes Mike was sleeping in were muddy, and a backpack lay on the floor, spilling blankets and torches. "Hey," Mike said tiredly, as Lucas sat down next to her den "how long have you been watching me sleep? I could have sworn it was Nancy there last night." He gave him a faint smile.

"Not too long." Lucas replied with a laugh. Then he grew serious, and looked Mike in the eye. "Mike... What happened last night? Nancy said you'd had a rough night but that's all." He watched as Mike closed his eyes, tears running silently down his cheeks. Then he looked up. "You sure you want the entire story?" Lucas smiled.

"Don't miss a detail, Wheeler."

Mike sat there, crying silent tears, telling Lucas every detail of last night. The meal, the things he found, Jonathan and his car (missing out the part about the cliff, of course. People already thought he was crazy). "I don't think he was too pleased with walking over here at 12 o'clock at night, but it gave him an excuse to talk to Nancy." He rolled his eyes at this, then studied Lucas' amazed face. "What, no words?" He smiled.

"Michael Wheeler, why didn't you invite me you bastard?!" He cried sarcastically.

"Sorry, sorry. But do me a favour, don't tell anyone else about this. Please." Suddenly his eyes were pleading and pitiful, his voice shaking and quick. "Don't worry, I won't." He spat onto the palm of his hand and they shook. Friends never break a promise, after all, especially when there's spit.

Dustin and Will arrived at 10:30, but by this time Mike had fallen back asleep, exasperated from the night before. "Hey Lucas," Dustin said quietly "why's he still asleep?" Inside, he wanted to tell them what Mike'd been through, but he couldn't betray him. "Nancy was watching over him when I got here," he explained, hoping they wouldn't notice him trying to think back to the older girl's words "and said something happened last night but won't tell me what." Not a lie, really. Nancy hadn't told him what had happened. Mike had. "I'm really worried about him." Dustin said sadly "He's in denial about her, um... dying, and it's making him."

"Depressed." Will finished. Lucas had almost forgotten the quiet boy was there.

"What? Yeah, he's in denial, but he's not depressed, right Dustin?" Dustin stared down at the table. "Listen, I care about him just as much as you do. I want him to be okay. But..." Lucas sat, silent. "So" He said quietly. Then stood up. Then sat. Then stood up again and paced around the room. Then sat down. Then walked to the stairs. "Where are you going?" Dustin whispered in a voice louder than a shout. "I'm borrowing Mrs Wheeler's phone. I need to speak to the chief."

Hoppers phone was ringing, and showed no sign of stopping. "Hello?" He answered, a glint of annoyance in his voice. Even after everything, mornings should still be for coffee and contemplation. "Chief? It's Lucas. I need to talk about Mike." His anger lifted straight away at the boy's name. Jim felt like it was his job to protect Mike after everything he'd been through. "What's wrong, is something the matter?" Lucas's voice grew low.

"No sir, not that I know of. But, erm... Dustin and Will, they seem to think he's in denial. And, erm... Depressed. And I was just wondering if they were right. I know it's a bit stupid but I just wanted to ask now whilst he's asleep."

"Yes. Yes, yes, I do think he's depressed, the poor lad. And he's in denial too. But..." He considered whether or not to carry on his sentence. "But he's right to be in denial. Because that girl... Well, she

ain't dead."

"Um, are you sure chief?" He asked, shocked "I mean, I'd love for her to be alive but-" Jim interrupted him "She's alive. I'm telling you and only you because I know you have Mike's best interests in mind. However, you're not to tell a single other soul. Do I make myself clear? Especially not Mike or that Henderson boy."

"Dustin, chief, his name's Dustin. But why not tell Mike. He's going over the edge. No, he's jumping off it. Where is she? He needs to know that she's okay." Hopper shouted down the phone. "NO! I don't know where she is, but I know she's there. And if you tell him, he'll just want to find her even more, and then what would happen?" He missed Lucas's next sentence, but was pretty sure he heard him say 'get more depressed and jump off the cliff again' "What was that? Jump off the-"

"Thank you chief. I must give Mrs Wheeler her phone back now. Bye!" He said in a hurry, before hanging up. Kids these days had no manners, he thought. He just hoped he made a good choice trusting that Sinclair boy. He might be the most realistic of his friends, but he was loyal to Mike. The question was, just how loyal?

"Nancy! Lucas!" It was Dustin shouting down from the basement. Nancy was there 5 seconds later, despite coming from her bedroom at the top of the house. "What? What is it Dustin?" Then she saw. Mike, curled into a ball, sleeping and screaming. "Mike! Mike, Mike, wake up, you have to wake up. It's another nightmare. It's me, Nancy. Lucas is still here. You need to wake up!" He was sat up then, crying, leaning into his sister's arms. "You're okay, you're okay. I'm here" she said soothingly.

"It- it was a different one Nancy." He whispered into her arms. "Sh- She was there but I couldn't get to her and then she was screaming for me but I was stuck and the bad men came and took her and I screamed and screamed but they wouldn't let her go and then when they took her I still couldn't move and her dress was just on the-"

"I know Mike, I know." She looked at Lucas with a look that asked if

he knew. He nodded his head yes. She sighed with relief. She was happy that she could at least have help with her brother. Then she looked expectantly at the other two boys. "What are you still standing here for, go get him some clean clothes and food." Dustin and Will cleared the stairs 2 steps at a time. When they were out of earshot, Nancy spoke to Mike again. "I'm sorry Mike. If I hadn't had let you go last night-"

"I- I would have gone anyway. It's not your fault." He smiled at her, and she felt a little better. "It breaks my heart when this happens to him. The nightmares." She said to Lucas sadly "I get the odd few, but for him they happen every time he closes his eyes." He nodded his head in understanding, and though she was certain he didn't fully get it, she was happy that she could talk to him, despite his young age. It meant that Mike was opening up to someone other than her. "The others," Lucas said to her "they think he's crazy. That's she's dead and he should move on. I mean, I thought she was dead at too, at first, but I know Mike. If he says she's out there, then she's out there, somewhere. We just need to find her." This time it was Nancy's turn to nod her head.

At 5 o'clock the boys went home. Well, Dustin and Will did. Mike wanted Lucas to stay over, partly because he felt bad for always keeping Nancy up, and partly because he liked Lucas's company. He'd been there when she was, though at first he had called her a traitor. Mrs Wheeler agreed, naïvely thinking her son had listened to her after all. Nancy went over to Steve's (I'm studying for science she said to her mom, covering her blushing cheeks with her brunette hair.) Karen accompanying Ted on a business trip, and Holly was staying at her Grandma's. It was just Mike and Lucas. After a few hours, it became Mike and Lucas and a ringing phone. When it had rung for the 3rd time, Lucas marched up the stairs and pulled it down. "Hello!?" He said angrily into the speaker. What he heard next turned him white. "Mike? Mike? Mike?" It couldn't be, could it? He remembered what the chief said. It was! "El? Is it you? Stay on the phone. It's Lucas not Mike. I can get Mike but you have to stay on the phone okay?" By this time, he was already in the basement. "It's El!" He shouted, throwing the receiver to Mike. "El? El? Oh my god El!

Where are you? I need to find you just tell me where you are!"

"Mike? Help. Please." Whimpering came from the phone before bursting into flames like the HeathKit had those months ago. Suddenly, Mike couldn't control his insides any longer. He weakened, and broke down in tears, crying, shouting, screaming. Nancy was just getting back, and when she heard screams she was there in an instant. She held him, and he just kept screaming and screaming Elevens name. It was only then that Lucas realised; this, ultimately, was one of his nightmares, happening in reality. He thinks that, combined with the noise and excitement, was why he collapsed onto the floor.

"Lucas? Lucas? Lucas!" Nancy was shouting into his face, trying to get him to wake up. Mike couldn't move, couldn't speak, couldn't breathe. It felt as if his insides had been emptied out, and now he could feel only 3 things. Pain. Sadness. And guilt. Guilt that Lucas was lying on the floor, unmoving. It brought back memories. Of when Mike had a fight with him for saying she was the monster. Of how she had screamed to them to stop but instead sent Lucas flying backwards, knocking him unconscious. Of how he'd yelled at her. Of how she'd ran away. Sure, they had found her, but he felt embarrassed that he had essentially done what he yelled at someone else for doing less than 5 months ago. "It's my fault," He choked, a tear running down his cheek "I was screaming and I knocked him unconscious. And I yelled at her for doing that, but I've just done it." Nancy's voice sounded a bit amused. "You didn't make him unconscious! Sure, your screams were loud, but it wasn't your fault!" At that moment, Lucas began to stir. "Lucas!" Mike cried and hugged his friend. "I'm so sorry, it's all my fault a-" he stopped when he saw that the other boy was laughing. "It's not your fault!" He said, choking on his laughter. This put Mikes mind at rest.

It took him all of 15 seconds to remember the other, more pressing issue. "We'll deal with the other thing in the morning." Nancy said quickly. It was, he thought, almost as if she had read his mind... No. He stopped thinking about that. Another dangerous path. He agreed

with Nancy, and sat back down in the den. He wouldn't, however, let her sleep in the basement with him again. Truth be told, he was feeling a little guilty that Nancy had always been there for him since it happened. She was getting no sleep, instead watching over him. She hadn't even had a chance to grieve the loss of her best friend properly, having only found out she was dead about 2 hours before Mike's world collapsed. She gave him a thankful smile, and went up the stairs.

Nancy's world had been shook some more in the last hour. Well, not exactly her world, but she was always there to catch her brother when he fell, so his world was just as much hers. And now he was trying his best to repay her, by telling her not to look after him that night. She looked around her room, and had no idea what to do with herself. It was around 11 o'clock that she decided to check in on him. He was sleeping peacefully, and smiling in his sleep. Tonight would be the first night in a long time that he slept completely soundly, nightmare-free.

Notes for the Chapter:

A/N Not much action in this chapter, but bear with me. Leaves any criticism below please. Kudos are good too!

4. 133 days since

Summary for the Chapter:

Shocking secrets are revealed that pull two people further apart; and Mike closer to El.

When Dustin woke up the next morning, his first thought was Mike. After yesterday's events, he had become frightened for his health, both physical and mental. He wanted to bike over to his house, but it was only 8:30, so instead he radioed Lucas. At least he could still find out how Mike was. "Lucas, are you there? Over." Lucas' reply was hushed, and came almost immediately. "I'm here. Over."

"How's Mike doing? Over."

"He's fine, actually. Nancy said this is the first time in months that he hasn't had a nightmare. Over." He felt a twinge of jealousy on hearing this, but it quickly faded. Mike needed friends about now, not people who felt jealous each other. "Oh, okay. Erm, was he still talking about... Her. Over." He was met with white noise, but after a while, the silence was broken. "Maybe he's not crazy." His voice became even quieter as he spoke these words. Dustin almost dropped the radio in shock. "What are you talking about? I mean, I know he's not crazy. You don't seriously think he's right though? That she's alive? Over."

"Listen Dustin, all I'm saying is we don't know for sure that she's... Dead. Anyway, I got to go. Mike's waking up. Over and out."

Dustin replayed the conversation in his head, and came to the conclusion that Lucas was hiding something. Obviously, he'd already known there was secrets between him and Mike. Between Mike and Nancy. Secrets that only Mike knew. But this felt different. It felt like... Like Lucas knew something, and was keeping it from him and Mike. Something that at least one of them should know. Dustin suddenly became angry. But then, he wasn't. After all, there were some secrets that were best kept as just that. A secret. Plus, if Lucas wasn't telling them something, he probably had his reasons.

Mike opened his eyes and slowly looked around the room. No Nancy. That usually meant he hadn't had any nightmares. Lucas was on the sofa, and when he realised Mike was awake, he slowly moved over to

the tent. "Hey Mike." He said in a hushed voice, "I'm guessing you slept well? No nightmares?" He shook his head.

"None." Lucas smiled at him

"Good. That's great, Mike. Nancy came down earlier to check on you. And Dustin radioed just a few minutes ago." Suddenly, Mike didn't feel as happy as he had been. "You didn't tell him about... The phone call? Did you?" Worry spread across his face "You didn't tell anyone, did you?"

"No. No. Relax. I didn't tell Dustin." Lucas gave him a calming smile, and he gave a long sigh of relief. "Thanks. We can't tell anyone. They'll think I'm crazy... Or they won't. They'll believe me and that place will find out and they'll hunt her. And they'll find her first and then she'll be gone and it'll be all my fault because I couldn't find her and I failed her." Tears welled up in his eyes as he looked to Lucas. "I failed her."

Will Byers was sat at home, awake. Like he had been for hours. He'd had the nightmare again, and when it came, there was no getting back to sleep. No one knew though. Not Jonathan. Not his mom. Not his friends. No one. They'd only get worried, and then they'd never let him out of their sight. He had considered telling Mike, but he never did. Mike already had too much going on with his life and the last thing he needed was Will's troubles. So he kept to himself. Like he did with most things. The slugs. The visions. The voices. He heard a girl's voice in his head, crying, pleading for help. He could have sworn she screamed "Mike", but that couldn't be possible. The only girl who it could be was... Dead. Three people had witnessed her die. She had to be. But the voice kept shouting, kept pleading, kept crying. Last night, the voice had been loud. It kept asking for Mike. Telling him to hurry. To help. Please. And now, it was back, just shouting his name. Will couldn't handle it. It was 10:15, so he grabbed his bike and cycled over to the Wheelers as fast as he could. Someone needed to know. Mike, needed to know.

There was loud banging on the front door. Seconds later, Will appeared in front of Nancy, Lucas and Mike. "Hey," he said "can I um, speak to Mike alone for a minute?" Mike saw his sister and best friend share a look, and interrupted them before they could say anything. "Guys, I'm fine. Look at me. Will will only be a minute"

"Okay. Just shout if you need me." Nancy said, raising an eyebrow.

She and Lucas walked up the stairs.

"So," Mike said cheerfully "what is it? Alien invasion? New D&D board? Dustin grew his teeth?" But one look at the smaller boy's face made him become serious and a bit worried. "Will, what is it?" He looked around, fidgeted, took a deep breath, and began to speak.

"I can hear her. In my head. She keeps shouting you and crying. It's making me go crazy and she won't st-"

"Wait." Mike said "you can hear... El? She's shouting me? In your head? Since when?" Will looked awkwardly to the floor. "Um... Since I got back." Mike sat down from shock. Then he looked at the other boy. "All this time... For over 4 months... You knew she was alive... And you never told me!? What sort of a friend are you?! You made me think I was CRAZY! Did it not occur to you to tell me?! Were you too busy trying to get her to stop that you didn't think 'Oh, I should tell Mike. He'd be so HAPPY.' WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?!"

"I- I- I thought I was going crazy. She's dead Mike. You and Dustin and Lucas saw it happen. She's gone. I'm sorry, but she is. And I'm pretty sure that dead people don't usually come back." Mike narrowed his eyes.

"You're standing right here. You were dead. The police found your body in the river, but you came back. Plus, if she was gone... How can you hear her? You've never met her yet her voice is in your head. Don't you get it. DEAD PEOPLE CAN'T TALK, WILL. And you don't just get the voice of someone you've never met in your head if they're dead. If she's not alive, then you're crazy. Seriously crazy. Which I can easily say you're not."

"Mike," Will said tiredly "I did meet her, remember. In that... Place. And maybe I am crazy. But I know this. DEAD. PEOPLE. DON'T. COME. BACK!" Mike sat silently for a while, and when he eventually did speak his voice was just barely a whisper. "Get out."

"Mike, I'm sorry. I really am. I-" By now Mike had had enough. "I SAID GET OUT!" He shouted, choking back tears. "Mike..." Will said quietly.

"NO! NO NO NO NO NO! GET. OUT. OF. MY. HOUSE!" He punched Will across the face as Nancy and Lucas hurried down the stairs, then collapsed onto the floor, crying and screaming.

"Oh my god MIKE!" Nancy cried, rushing to her little brother while Lucas picked Will off the floor. "Byers, I think you should go." Will walked out the basement door, but turned around at the last moment.

"I'm really really sorry Mike." And then he was gone.

Nancy was sat on the floor, cradling Mike in her arms. "Mike," she said in a hushed voice "Mike, what happened?" He looked his large, brown, tearful eyes into hers.

"He knew. He knew she was alive. All this time, and he knew. He's always known. And then-" he laughed "and then he tells me that she has to be dead! He thinks I'm crazy!" Nancy's face flooded with confusion and worry. "What do you mean, he knew she was alive?"

"He said something about hearing her in his head, crying and shouting me. Then he says that she's dead, she has to be dead because dead people don't come back." He scoffed "Even though he's here alive and well. And the best part is that he doesn't remember ever meeting her, but somehow her voice is always in his head! But no, she just has to be dead. 4 months Nancy. He knew for 4 months, and not once did he decide to mention it. Instead he just went along with Dustin, thinking I'm crazy. Dustin, yeah. But all this time he knew. Hey, I probably am crazy. I'm probably out of my mind. I'm a lunatic. I'm a mess. And I'm dangerous. You should all just stay away from me before I get someone killed. I couldn't protect her. I can't protect anyone. I'm a danger to both of you." Nancy cupped her hands around his face, tears running down her cheeks. "No! No no no! You're not crazy! You're not dangerous! You're my baby brother! It's not your job to protect us! Listen to me. Screw Will. Screw him. If he doesn't think you should know, then screw him! But don't you ever say you're a danger to anyone, because you're not." She hugged him tight, while Lucas sat on the sofa with his head in his hands, before walking silently up the stairs.

Notes for the Chapter:

A/N Writing this at 1.15 in the morning probably didn't do any good for my mental health, but idgaf. I love these characters too much. Anyway, almost halfway through the story. Hope you enjoyed it.

5. Still 133 days since

Summary for the Chapter:

As Mike learns some more about the lab, he becomes determined to get El back.

Notes for the Chapter:

So before you read I just wanna say sorry for not uploading. I've finished writing this (it's on Fanfiction.net under the same name) so I can't act on any suggestions. Also, I know the all formatting is crap and inconsistent and I'm sorry but it's basically just unedited (save for spell check). Anyway I hope you enjoy.

Jim's phone was ringing again. "Hello?"

"Hey chief. Listen. I have to tell Mike. He already knows she's alive. She connected to the phone last night. And now he just found out Will has known she's alive ever since he got back. I just don't think he'd be able to handle anymore secrets. He'd do something really bad. So, we really need to tell him. Please." Hopper thought this over for a minute. If Mike already knew, then there was no more point keeping it a secret. "I'll be over in 10." He said before hanging up. He was going to tell Mike. Then, he was going to make a plan to bring her home. He had to. She was his daughter. But no one would ever find out...

10 minutes later there was another knock at the door. This time, it was the chief. "Oh, are you going to tell me I'm crazy too? She has to be dead, oh yes. I don't want to hear it." Mike said angrily when he saw him. Jim bent down to Mike's level. "Mike. You're not crazy... I know she is alive." Mike looked at him, shocked. "What! You too!" "Listen, I wanted to tell you... But I couldn't. It was too risky." Mike cocked his head to the side and raised his eyebrows. "Why? And how long have you known. Be honest." Hopper took a deep breath. "When Will got back and everyone was at the hospital, I got picked up by some government people. They told me they had reason to believe she was still out there, not to tell anyone, and if there were any

sightings to report them to them. Obviously they sound a bit crazy, so I do some research of my own. I break into the labs, and they have videos that show she might be alive. I track them down to the forest, install a wooden box and every few days I go put some food and Eggos in it. Every time I go back, the food is always gone. I didn't tell you because clearly, I'm not going to tell them about this and they might've installed bugs around the house. But I've had some friends from maintenance do a quick sweep when they were fixing a house down the road, and there's no bugs anywhere on this street." Nancy looked at her brother. "You okay Mike? You look a little... Sick." "No. I'm fine. I'm just..." His face hardened, and he looked Hopper in the face. "What do we do now?"

"I think our best bet would be to try and contact her, or wait until she contacts you again." Hopper said. "When she does, we can ask her what she can see. We'll go from there." He looked over to Mike, who had unconsciously clutched the radio. "Okay," he said "okay. Okay. Good." He looked at the others. "I think I know how to get her to reach out." Nancy looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "Really? How?" Mike fidgeted with his hands

"Umm... I think- I think if I'm in danger, she'll help. Last November... I jumped off a cliff."

"Wait, WHAT!" Nancy cried, standing up.

"I did it to save Dustin! Troy had a knife to his neck and said I had to jump. So I did. But... She stopped me from falling. She saved me. And we had been looking for her. We didn't know where she was. But she found us. So, if I was in danger again, she'd reach out. Theoretically." Nancy looked to Lucas and the Chief. "You guys aren't actually considering this, are you? It's crazy!"

"It could work!" Mike protested. Nancy turned to him, tears in her eyes. "And if it doesn't? Then what Mike? I'm supposed to, what, let you get hurt? Or worse? You could die Mike!"

"Hey, hey." Hopper stepped in "let's not jump to worst case scenario. It could work. And we can be smart about this. Put him in a danger that he can come out of straight away if he needs to." He turned to Mike "when you were with her that week, was there anything she did, apart from make things levitate obviously. Anything we could try and get her to redo?"

"Well," Lucas said, as everyone turned towards him "there is one thing."

Nancy hugged her little brother tight, then held him at arm's length. "Are you sure you want to do this, Mike? We could find another way. A way that isn't this dangerous." Mike looked into her eyes and shook his head quickly. "No, we couldn't. There might not be another way. And I'm going to do everything I can to get her back. I don't want to wait any longer." Nancy sighed, then gave him a small smile. "Okay," she said "okay. I love you Mike." At that moment, Hopper walked over to them with a serious look on his face. "Sorry to break this up, but we really should do it soon. You remember everything, kid?" Mike nodded.

"Only move at the last moment if I have to; don't let go of the radio; if she reaches out, stay calm and ask her to describe what she can see." "Alright," the Chief said "let's do this thing." Mike walked half way up the street, then stopped, shaking with the radio clutched in his hands. Suddenly, he was drowned in headlights as the oncoming car came towards him with 3 ways of stopping that wouldn't happen on their own. He held his breath and counted the distance between him and the car. 5 metres. 4 metres. 3. 2... He let out a gasp as, once again, a vehicle flipped over his head, narrowly missing a collision with him. As it landed, he felt radio heat up in his palms. "Eleven?" He said quietly. For a few seconds, it was silence, and he was afraid she hadn't been able to reach out. Then: "Mike?"

"El? El!" He cried, for a moment forgetting what he was supposed to do. "Mike? Are you okay?" She whimpered softly. He smiled. "I'm okay, El. You saved me again. Hey, I know you're drained, but stay with me a little longer, okay? Tell me what you can see." He was met with silence, and was about to break down right there in the middle of the street when her response came. "Black." She said. "I know. I get that it's dark. What can you see though? Any houses?" Again she repeated.

"Black." Mike was really confused.

"It's all black? Okay. Okay." By now, Nancy, Lucas and the Chief had crowded around him. "Have you ever been there before?" This time, she responded almost instantly. "Yes."

"Yes? When, when?" He asked, even more confused now than he had been a couple of sentences ago. "In... The... Bath." She replied weakly. It was clear she was draining herself even more with this connection. "In the bath? You mean when you saw Will and Barb?" She hummed a little in what Mike took as a yes. "Okay. Okay. Eleven? I'm going to find you, okay. I'm going to save you." Weakly, she managed 2 more

words. "Goodbye Mike." He refused them straight away. "No. No no no no no! No more goodbyes! Eleven? Eleven! I'm going to save you!" The radio crackled, then sparked and Mike collapsed onto his knees. Nancy bent down to his level and hugged him as he cried into her shoulder. Lucas looked to the Chief. "There's only one person I can think of who could help us with this, but you might not like it." Hopper turned his head to the side.

"Who?" Mike and Nancy both looked at him.

"Dustin."

The phone was ringing. Dustin's mom answered, then shouted upstairs. "Dustin! It's for you!"

"Coming!" He raced down the stairs and took the receiver from her. "Hello?"

"Hey Dustin," It was Lucas "Um, can you come to the Wheeler's? And be quick. Bye!" Dustin furrowed his brow. What was going on? Why hadn't he just radioed him? "Mom!" He cried "I'm going to Mike's!" He jumped on his bike and pedalled over to the Wheeler's house.

A few minutes later, he opened the basement door. "Hey-" Dustin stopped short and looked around at all the people "what's going on?" The Chief looked to Lucas, then to Dustin. "We need your help."

"Oh, okay. Cool. With what?" He asked. Lucas and Nancy explained about El, and what she had said. When they'd finished, he shook his head and sat next to Mike. "That's messed up. You okay?" He gave him a faint smile. "Yeah. Yeah. I'm good." Dustin turned to look at Lucas. "I still don't understand why I'm here." He said

"Well..." Lucas explained "We need to find out why she's in that place and how we get her back, and I figured if anyone could, it'd be you." Mike looked at him, his sad, brown eyes piercing his through him. "Please Dustin. Can you try to find out how I can bring her home, or at least why she's there." He thought for a moment, pacing around the room, then stopped. "I can't guarantee anything," he said "but I'll try if you want me to."

The next hour was spent with Mike sleeping, as he did a lot nowadays, Hopper going out to the woods, and Dustin pacing up and down the street in deep thought. As Nancy was about to go upstairs for some food, he burst through the door. "I think I've got it!" He yelled. Lucas woke Mike up, and they crowded around Dustin as he

explained. "When she went in the pool, she was there in her mind, right? She saw Barb and Will there, but they were in the Upside Down. Which means, she was able to connect to them by thinking about them. Not even by what they looked like, because she's never met them, but them as a person. Just their name. So she wasn't physically there, and neither were they. Their minds were in sort of like a 3rd dimension. Not a parallel universe, but a completely different dimension. And you know when she disappeared? We thought she disintegrated, but she didn't. The black specks surrounded her, and then she was gone. I think that when she was destroying the Demogorgon, she used so much energy that she physically put herself in that 3rd dimension. That explains how she gets Hopper's food too. She can think to something, like a box or when she found Castle Byers, and she can interact with it because she's physically in the space now instead of mentally, but she can't actually be where the thing is." He looked around at everyone's faces. "Got that?"

"Um," Mike said uneasily "I'm really, really glad you figured that out. Truly. And I don't want to push, but... Do you know how we could get her out? Or maybe just get to her?" Dustin inhaled, then let out a long sigh. "I don't know how to get her back. But, I do have an idea of how to get to her. She's in the 3rd dimension, right? As far as we know, there's only one way to get there with disappearing off the face of the earth." Mike's eyes widened. "So your saying-" He nodded his head. "What I'm saying is that, theoretically, to get to her... Someone needs to go in the bathtub."

"I'll do it." Mike said straight away. Nancy was about to protest, but he cut her off. "Who else could go? She only really knows me, Lucas and Dustin. Dustin should stay here, and, no offence Lucas, but they weren't exactly close until that afternoon. So I'm doing it." He turned to Dustin. "Do you remember everything from last time?" He gave him a goofy smile. "Oh please. How could I forget something like that?" Mike sighed with relief. "Good. There's only one problem... Where can we do it?" Everyone pondered over it for a minute, then the Chief spoke up. "We could try outside my cabin. It had running warm and cold water, there's loads of room, and it's close to the woods, so that might make her signal stronger if she's connecting to a place she's 'been to' before. It might not, but it might."

"There," Mike said "It's all sorted then." He looked to the clock, which

read 4:40. "What are we waiting for? Let's go."

20 minutes later, they were all outside the Chief's house. Lucas and Dustin had gotten the pool from Will's house ('For Holly'), Hopper had again taken all the rock salt from the school, and they were setting everything up like they had last time. Finally, it was ready. Mike pulled the blacked-out goggles over his eyes, walked to the centre of the pool, lay down and let himself float. Dustin had hold of the radio, fiddling with it to try and catch a signal. Suddenly, the cabin lights flickered, then all shut off.

Mike looked around. Everything was just... black. The floor felt wet, but wasn't deep. This was, he guessed, where El was. He walked around, calling her name. "El? Eleven? Eleven? El where are you!" Nancy gripped his hand as they heard him say these words, and Dustin looked to the chief. It had worked. Mike kept turning in circles, looking for any colour, any conformation that there was something else here, other than blackness. Suddenly, he spotted a grubby pink spot in the distance. Eleven. Straight away, he ran towards her, faster than his legs could carry him, because he had to hurry. He had to get to her before she disappeared again. When he finally approached her, she was holding her knees to her chest, sobbing into them. Her muffled cries carried through the receiver, to the outside world. Lucas and Dustin gasped. In the time they had known her, they'd never heard Eleven sound so... sad. And terrified. "Eleven!" Mike cried, dropping to his knees in front of her. She looked up at him in surprise, her big, brown eyes wide with confusion and terror. "Mike?" She whispered, her voice hoarse. "I'm here. I'm here." He kept his voice steady and quiet, for he knew she hadn't had any human interaction for months and she might get scared of the loud noises. Plus, if he got any more excited he'd pass out. "I'm right here, El. I've missed you so much. We're gonna get you out of here, okay? Me, Nancy, the Chief, Lucas, Dustin, we're gonna get you out. I promise." He heard a faint roar and his mind briefly flashed back to November. "It can't hurt you," he said, sensing the fear in her eyes "you killed it. You saved us all." She looked deep into his eyes. "Run." She croaked, her voice dry and almost gone. "What? No, no! I can't leave you!" Tears rolled silently down his cheeks "I can't lose you again." But still she persisted. "Run." She said, backing away. "Go. Run." She was shouting now.

"Run!" Mike clenched his fists and shook his head. "No! Why? Why El? Tell me why!" Every word they said was broadcast through the radio, and Nancy felt sick hearing her little brother like that. El looked at Mike, her face full of pain, sadness, terror. Dark circles had formed under her eyes. She was pale as milk. Her bones were weak. She had no meat on her, and she looked as if she'd snap. But to him, she was still pretty. And he was still desperate to save her. "Please El," He said softly "tell me why." Her body shook, her voice caught, and tears dropped on the floor. "I'm- I'm the monster."

"What? No! No! You're not the monster!" He argued. He reached for her hand, but just as he was about to make contact with her, she screamed. Her ears bled, and if there had been any glass, it would have smashed to a million pieces. Even when it came through the radio, they all covered their ears tightly. When it was beginning to subside, Nancy reached for Mike's shoulder, but he shot up and started breathing heavily. "Di-Did you guys hear what she said?" He asked, looking around at them, although he could tell by their faces that they had. "She's wrong. She's not the monster. She cannot be the monster." He turned to face Dustin, and his voice caught in his neck. "Right?"

"I don't know." Dustin sighed. "I really don't know." Nancy looked at her little brother, who was in the verge of fainting from tiredness. "Come on Mike. Let's get you home. You need to rest. We'll sort all this out tomorrow okay?" He looked at her in confusion. "I have school though?" Hopper chuckled softly. "As far as they're concerned, they've had a break in. And as Chief, it's my personal opinion that they keep it closed tomorrow. Just in case." He winked at him.

"See Mike?" Nancy said. "So come on. You can't do anything if you're almost collapsed." She carefully guided him out, wrapped a towel around his shivering body, and together they sat in the back of Hopper's car. Lucas and Dustin said goodbye, before biking home. "Come on kids," Jim said through the mirror as he sat in the driver's seat "let's get you home. We've all had a long day."

6. 134 days since

Summary for the Chapter:

When the plan starts falling into place but everyone wants to wait with time that he knows they don't have, Mike turns to someone unlikely for help in bringing her home. Alive.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm so sorry! I haven't updated in like a week! I've had loads of English and history essays to write *dies inside* but I should be all done for now. Anyway I hope you enjoy this chapter, it's one of my favourites.

She said goodbye, then turned to face the monster. "No more." She demanded. With her hand in front of her, she focused on its chest, desperately trying to rip away any form of life. She began to scream in anger, strengthening her powers. Black specks surrounded the pair. After the screaming had stopped, Mike looked up, ready for the pain that would come. But what he saw... it was worse. She was still there, collapsed on the floor, looking fearfully up at the monster. The monster. It was still there, looming over her powerless body, free of its invisible restraints. If it'd had a face, he's sure it would have had a sly smirk plastered across it. And Mike. He was still there. He was still unable to move. He was still desperate to save her. There was still nothing he could do except scream her name. The Demogorgon stooped down, opened each of its petal-like segments of face one by one, and hissed. Eleven screamed again. But this time, it wasn't from anger. She was screaming in terror. She looked over to Mike as it took a step back, preparing to attack and-

Mike shot up again in a cold sweat. It was just a nightmare. He got out of bed, for there was no way he was going to get back to sleep now. He found himself going into the basement and, despite the pain, let his legs take over. Her tent was still there, exactly as it had been since November. He sank down into it, hugging the pillow where her

head would have been. Where her head would be soon. Because he was going to end it. He was going to bring Eleven home...

Nancy woke up as Mike came into her room. "Oh um sorry I was just seeing if you were awake..." he stuttered, backing away.

"What? No, no! It's fine. I'm a light sleeper anyway." She said, beckoning him over. "Come here." He sat gently down at the end of her bed, and straight away she noticed his tear stained face. "Hey, what wrong? You have another nightmare?" He nodded his head. "It's okay. We're gonna get her back, okay? I promise. Do you want to talk about it?" She was surprised when he answered with a meek "Yes." "It was that night. The night she disappeared. But... she didn't disappear. And neither did it. She was so powerless Nancy. And she was awake. She had to see everything that was happening to her." He collapsed into her, tears running down his cheeks. "I couldn't save her. I should've done something, and I didn't." Now Nancy didn't know if he was talking about the nightmare or that night, but it didn't matter.

"Hey," she said, cupping his face in her hands "hey. We're gonna get her back. I promise." Mike scoffed at the last word.

"Promises get broken." She shook her head firmly and looked him dead in the eye with a serious expression on her face.

"Not this one. I can feel it, here." She tapped her stomach "I know."

At 10am, the Chief, Mike, Nancy, Lucas and Dustin were all in the basement, discussing yesterday's events. "So," Dustin announced "I was thinking about what she said." They stared at him, and he gulped. "She knew hardly any words, right? Didn't know what friend or promise meant. She only knew to call the people from the lab 'bad men', and they were definitely monsters. She definitely wouldn't be able to use metaphors. But that's what she used, when she said that she was the monster, right? Wrong! Well, maybe." Mike looked at

him with a confused look. "What do you mean?" Dustin sighed.

"Well... she opened the gate, yeah. How did she open it if she hadn't been to the Upside Down?" Mike still looked just as confused, but Lucas and Nancy gasped. "What?" He demands "What is it?"

"I'm saying... maybe she is the monster." At this, Mike stood up with such a force that his chair went toppling backwards. "No! Are you crazy! She's not a monster! She saved us! All of us! She-"

"Listen to me! Just hear me out, okay? I'm not saying she's a monster. I'm saying that she is the monster, that she created it. The gate opened at the lab. She endured almost 13 years of torture and pain. She would have grown insecure. Developed fears. And you know how I was saying that the black space was her mind? Well, what if all her fears built up in her mind and created the Demogorgon. So it's like a mental representation of her fear. But when she opened the gate, it became a physical representation, so she was no longer part of it... until she destroyed it. By doing that, it became part of her again." He looked around at the stunned faces. "Theoretically."

"I-" Mike began, at a loss for words. "I'm going to get some water." As he retreated up the stairs, Nancy shook her head worriedly.

"He's going to take that hard." The chief nodded in agreement.

"Well, at least now we know." They sat in silence for a few minutes. Dustin's stomach broke the quiet.

"Sorry. I skipped breakfast. Can I go get a banana or something?" He asked, smiling apologetically.

"Sure." Nancy said.

"So," Lucas asked "what do we do know?"

"Um-We-I-I don't know." Hopper eventually admitted. At that moment, as if on cue, Dustin appeared at the bottom of the basement stairs.

"Guys. We have a problem." For some reason, Nancy felt her stomach drop, and she bounded up the stairs to the kitchen. Once there, she felt like throwing up upon finding a missing Mike, some mysteriously vanished food, and a note that read 'I have to save her. I promised. – Mike'. Hopper read it over a few times, then groaned loudly. "What?" Nancy asked "What is it?"

"There's a big storm on its way." He admitted. "It's set to flood most of Mirkwood..." Nancy gasped.

"Oh. My. God." She raced to grab her coat, and headed towards the door.

"Where are you going?" He asked. She glared him down.

"Seriously? Where do you think I'm going? I'm going to find Mike!" He sighed.

"Not without a car you're not." He shook his keys. "Come on. We'll check around the woods." They were about to go through the door, but they stopped halfway.

"Um," Lucas said awkwardly "what do you want us to do?" Both the chief and Nancy replied in unison. "Nothing." Before they could get out the door, Dustin shouted "Wait!" He threw Nancy his radio. "Keep it on channel 6. If he comes back, we'll radio you."

"Thanks." She called, as she and the Chief got in the car, leaving the two boys to watch them drive away.

Mikes legs pedalled furiously as he biked his way to the Byer's house. Despite the urge he was feeling to beat Will to a bloody pulp, he knew he needed him. Eleven needed him. So when he knocked in the door and was met by Jonathan, he tried to keep his anger from betraying him. "Is Will in? I need to see him. Quick." Urgency surged through his voice, and he felt ashamed at sounding so desperate. However, it must've done the trick because Jonathan retreated and seconds later was replaced by Will. "Listen, Mike, I'm really sorry about-" Mike cut him off.

"Get your bike and let's go." He said gruffly, walking towards his own. Will cocked his head to one side

"Where?" Mike turned around to face the confused boy.

"We're going to find Eleven, dumbass."

5 minutes later, and they had reached the fence that surrounded the now-empty laboratory (for they had cleared out and gone elsewhere just last month). They stood in the pouring rain, hacking away at it with a log until there was a hole big enough for the pair of them to fit through. Mike wriggled under, and Will was about to follow him when he heard a voice in the distance. No, two voices. One of a young woman and the other a fairly gruff voiced man. They were too far away; he couldn't tell at first what they were saying. But as he listened closely, he heard them clearly shouting Mike. "Um," he said awkwardly "how many people *actually* know you're out here?" Mike smiled wickedly.

"Just you and I, I'm afraid."

"What!" Will shouted "Mike, we have to go back. They'll be worried sick." He reached for the other boy's shoulder, but was shrugged off.

"And I haven't been? 4 months Will. She's been gone for over 4 months. I've been alone for over 4 months. With no idea whether she was dead or just lost or hiding. It's now or never. When I saw her... she looked on the verge of death. If we leave her there any longer, she'll die. She'll actually die for real. And if she does... it'll be your fault. Yeah, she might die when we get her back... but at least she won't be alone. So I'm going to get her," He looked Will sternly in the eye "with or without you."

Nancy screamed his name again, but she knew it was pointless. He'd gone to find her, and he wouldn't be back until he'd done just that. She slumped against a tree for shelter against the rain. Mike was out there, somewhere, in this rain, all alone... wait. She grabbed Hopper's arm and started to pull him in the opposite direction.

“Woah, what are you doing?” She stopped for a moment and looked at him with a determined expression plastered to her face. “I think I know where he’s gone. And I don’t think he’s alone.”

They arrived at the Byers’ house less than 2 minutes later, and Jonathan answered the door. “Hey Jonathan,” she said “have you seen Mike?”

“Um, yeah, he came for Will about 10 minutes ago. Why? Is something the matter?” Nancy fidgeted with her hands and looked at the ground. “Maybe. He ran off looking for Eleven...” he finished the sentence for her. “... and took Will with him. But why? How can Will help?” she looked at him guiltily.

“I can’t tell you right now Jonathan. Will should. As soon as we find him and Mike, we’ll bring him back. I promise.” And with that she turned around and walked away, leaving him to stare in awe and confusion at the girl he loved so much.

The corridors were eerily empty, and Mike had the feeling they were being watched. They peered through every door they passed, with Will as their ‘compass’. As they got nearer (or, at least what they thought was nearer) to El, his stomach became heavier and heavier. Suddenly, he doubled over as the pain became unbearable. Mike rushed to his side, and after making sure he was okay opened the nearest door. Inside was a small, child size bed. But it looked nothing like a bedroom. Tiles covered the walls, a metal bedside table with a small plant pot on top of it was next to the bed, and the door was made of thick, heavy steel. It looked more like a prison cell. Taped to one of the walls was a child’s drawing, the only conformation that it’d been some sort of bedroom. As Mike looked closer at the drawing, he gasped. It was a picture of a tall man with Papa above it, and a little girl with no hair... it said 011. He wanted to be sick. For 12 years, *this* is where they’d been keeping her. If that Brenner guy was still around, Mike would’ve have punched him till he bled and moaned and couldn’t move. How dare he. How *dare* he! Treating a little girl like a prisoner, making her believe you were her father.

Vile! As his anger built up, he almost didn't notice the black glow coming from behind the bed. Almost. He pulled it aside, and saw a large black hole. No. It looked more like some sort of... Vortex. Whirlpool. *Gate*. It was black, and nothing else. No sign of light. No sign of colour. Nothing but blackness. "Will!" he shouted. The smaller boy had now regained his strength, and was there a couple of seconds later, despite the pain that shot through him as he entered the room. "Wh-What is that thing?" Mike smiled, hope flooding into him.

"That," he said "is how we get to Eleven."

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Will asked Mike. "We could wait for Nancy and the Chief. I'm sure they're on their wa- "

"No." Mike cut him off. "No. She's been trapped there long enough. I'm not leaving her there any longer. I need to hurry. It looks like it's about to collapse in on itself. Remember the plan? Stay out here, don't come in no matter what. If you see Nancy or the Chief, don't let them in. Stall for me. And if you see any monsters... Run. Whether I'm out or not, you run, okay?" Will nodded his head slowly.

"I still think this is a really really bad idea." he said. Mike sighed. "Well it's a good job you're not in charge." He turned to enter the pit of blackness, but Will put his hand on his shoulder and turned him around. "Hey, be careful, okay? And I'm really sorry I never told you." He smiled. "I know you are." Then he stepped backwards into the hole... and was gone. Just before the hole turned back into an undamaged wall.

7. In Between

Summary for the Chapter:

Will's really fucking worried, El's alive (barely), and Nancy's got one question: where the fuck is Mike?

Notes for the Chapter:

haha... 2 years later, here we are... so, i guess this update is a /little/ late... :/ (also im proud of past katie for kinda predicting the whole 'el closing gate scene' just, y'know, opposite)

He was there. In the 'in between' as he had taken to calling it in his head. He wasn't dead. That was good news. As he looked around (though there was no point because it was never-ending blackness as far as he could see, and probably farther too) he expected to feel different. But he felt exactly the same as he had on the outside. Before, in the bath... he'd felt... distant. Hazy. Like he wasn't really there, which he supposed he hadn't been. But now he was actually in this place, he could feel it. The coldness. The darkness. The emptiness. Every little sound. That was probably the reason he managed to find her, for otherwise he could have walked on the spot and not noticed- that's how black it was, with no starting or ending point to it. When he found her, she was shaking, hugging her knees to her chest. Her cheeks were tear stained, dried blood was clustered under her left nostril, and a deep cut that had scabbed over ran across her forehead. Her cheeks were hollower than usual, her ribs were showing through the scrap of clothing that used to be a dress, and her under-eyes were dark. Her hair was slightly below her ears. But her eyes. Her eyes were still the same, brown, huge, frightened and heart-breaking. He approached her cautiously, careful to be silent, but still she sensed him there. She looked up, and scampered away from him "Mike?" she asked, as if she were making sure it wasn't just a dream. Mike knew the feeling. "Mike. Not safe." He shook his head firmly. "I don't give a crap if it's not safe. I don't give a crap if us dying in here is inevitable. I'm her with you, actually here, and I'm not leaving you behind." He sat down beside her, and put her head on his shoulder as he held her icy hands. "It's going to be okay.

"We're gonna get out of here." He turned to face her, a sad expression on his face. "I need you to try to open a temporary gate between here and the outside world."

Her entire body shook, and he hazelnut eyes grew wide. "Bad. Bad place..." realisation hit him like a truck. "No! No! You'll do great El. I know you will. Just a gate from here to home, not to the Upside Down. I know you can do that. I believe in you." Relief visibly flooded through her body, but still she looked sceptical. "Not strong enough..."

"It's gonna take a lot of power, I know. It'll drain you. I don't want you to have to do this, but for now it's our only option. I'm so sorry." A tear rolled down his cheek, and she gently brushed it away. "Don't be sorry Mike." She said with a ghost of a smile, and buried her nose into his chest, letting every last piece of vulnerability run its final course as he wrapped his arms around her shoulders. They stayed like that for a while, both afraid to let the other go again. Eventually, though, she pulled away and took a deep breath. "Ready?" Mike asked her. She bit her lower lip. "Ready."

Nancy and Hopper hurried through the halls of the laboratory, and it made her feel nauseous. This building had been there for as long as she could remember, completely innocent looking. Yet it'd been hiding at least one child (Nancy supposed there would have been 10 more before El) from the outside world, completely isolated and tortured. She tried to keep up with the Chief as he went quickly down corridor after corridor, clearly knowing where he was going. Eventually, they stopped at a steel door, outside which Will was sat, clutching his knees and panicking once he saw them. "Shit." he whispered, standing up to them. "Um, hey guys. Fancy seeing you here...?" Hopper huffed.

"Cut the crap, kid. Where's Mike? And don't lie to me. We know you came here with him." Will sighed, and studied the floor hardily. When he looked back up, his face wore a guilty expression. "Gone. He's gone."

Mike held her hand, and she closed her eyes, focusing. As she emptied her mind, she was shocked to find Papa's words coming to her.

That man before you... I need you to find him.

She focused on her blanket fort, on the boys, on familiarity, on happiness, on freedom.

I want you to find it.

Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale.

It can't hurt you. Not from here.

Deep breath. Deep breath.

It's okay, Eleven.

No. It wasn't okay. All her life, those people had tortured her. All her life, they'd been keeping her a secret from the rest of the world. All her life, they'd deceived her. All her life, she had given them exactly what they wanted. Her anger built up, and she directed it to her powers, screaming. Mike never let go of her hand, squeezing it tighter, reassuring her that he wasn't leaving her side. Suddenly, her power reached its peak, and the two of them went hurtling backwards.

"What do you mean, gone?" Nancy said quietly, dreading the answer.

"He-He" Will stuttered "He went into some sort of... gate. Everything was just black. I don't mean dark. I mean black. Completely black. He went in and then- it closed. It just disappeared." He looked fearfully at Nancy, who looked as if she wanted to reach down and snap his puny body in half. "He said he had a plan. That he was going to get El." Nancy's face sat unreadable for a moment. Then she spoke, her tone surprisingly calm, considering the circumstances. "Of course he did. He obviously had a plan. That plan probably didn't include getting himself stuck in her mind though. This is Mike I'm talking about. He gets an idea, half-plans it, and then rushes off without knowing what the fuck he's gonna do. Of course." She looked at the Chief, a sort of calm plastered on her face that was scarier than if she had been angry. "So. What do we do now?"

Pain pierced through Mike's lower leg as he tried (and failed) to stand up. It'd landed beneath him funny. Normally, the pain would've been

unbearable and he would've sat there crying. But as he saw El lying on the floor unconscious, blood dripping from her eyes, nose, ears and mouth, adrenaline pumped through him and he shuffled over to her, putting two of his fingers to her neck. There was a pulse. A faint one, but a pulse all the same. He pulled her limp body into his arms and slowly carried her over to the gate, barely acknowledging the pain that should have made it hard to breath, never mind walk. The gate. It'd worked. The gate was there, real as he was. But it was fading fast, and he knew that soon, it wouldn't be there at all. He stopped thinking about that, and focused on El's peaceful face, afraid it would be the last time he saw it.

Lucas and Dustin were backed into a corner as they stared at the swirling black hole that was in the wall of Mike's basement. "Mental." Dustin said, his jaw hitting the floor. Lucas considered getting closer, but changed his mind quickly. "What. The Fuck. Is that thing."

"It looks like some sort of..." just then, a hand reached through it, startling them. "SHIT!" Dustin screamed "SHOOT IT SHOOT IT SHOOT IT!"

Lucas shouted back at him "WITH WHAT DUMBASS?" Suddenly, they heard a voice. It was quiet, but they heard. "Dustin! Lucas! Nancy!"

"Is that...?" the voice cried out again "Lucas! Dustin!"

"Mike!" they almost screamed, grabbing his hand and pulling him through, into the room. He lay there, on the floor, groaning, his arms wrapped around a small, unconscious body. "Eleven." Dustin whispered. Suddenly, Mike seemed to realise what was happening, because he stood with her cradled into him and hobbled over to her tent, wincing in pain with every step he took, before placing her down gently and taking a hold of her hand. Dustin looked from them to Lucas, who was radioing Nancy and the Chief. He knew it was going to be a long night.

"Please Nancy, you have to let me see him!" Will moaned, as the Chief pulled up to his house. She turned around to face him and gave him an intimidating glare. "Or I could just stop by tomorrow." He said quickly, rushing out of the car and into his house. As soon as he was safely indoors, the Chief sped over to the Wheeler's house, probably

earning himself about a dozen speeding tickets, and not caring at all. Nancy jumped out of the moving vehicle before he even had a chance to stop, and ran to the basement door, throwing it open. Inside, Mike was crying, holding onto Eleven's hand. Nancy's breath caught as she realised. She was back. The girl was a worrying shade of almost blue, and her chest rose ever so slightly every now and then, possibly the only sign of life. Mike looked fearfully at his sister and the Chief, who was now standing behind her, with his sad brown eyes as they spilled tears down his colourless cheeks. "Please," he whispered "you have to help her."

Immediately, Hopper began to give the girl's almost lifeless body CPR, barking instructions to Dustin and Lucas. Nancy wrapped a blanket around Mike, who was ice cold but shivering for a completely different reason. He looked as if he might scream, or cry, or both. Seconds ticked by. Soon, it'd been almost 5 minutes. Nancy was starting to lose hope, and was planning how to help Mike through his inevitable grief (watching the love of your life die once was traumatising enough, so twice would surely make him a type of broken that was unfixable) when she heard a small gasp behind her. Lucas and Dustin were whooping and cheering, the Chief sighed with relief, and life flooded back into Mike's eyes. Eleven coughed, obviously trying to get used to all the oxygen in her lungs. She was alive. Mike rushed to her, yelping in pain but taking no notice, and wrapped his arms around her icy body in a warm embrace. They were both crying into one another, whispering things to each other. Nancy could tell that the other two boys wanted to bombard the girl with questions (she, too, would like to know what the fuck was going on) but couldn't bear to break the two apart, so she pulled them up the stairs, Hopper following shortly behind them. They needed some privacy...

Mike was the first to break the hug, though he wasn't entirely sure why. "Eleven." He said. What the hell is wrong with you? he thought. You have so many things to say to her, so many things to admit, and here's your chance. Spit it out Wheeler! Spit it out! But he couldn't stop looking into those eyes, those eyes that had seen so many terrible things yet still managed to be full of life. He couldn't stop adoring the small smile she was wearing, despite living alone in the cold for 4 months. "Eleven." He said again, it being all he could say.

He never wanted to stop saying her name, feeling the taste of it on his lips. He never wanted to stop holding her, the way she slotted perfectly into his side. "Eleven."

"Mike." She said. He never wanted to stop hearing her say his name, the way it sounded on her lips. He couldn't bear the thought of losing her again...

She smiled up at him, at his pale face, at his faint freckles. She never wanted to lose sight of that smile, the one that made her feel warm and put a weird feeling in her stomach. She never wanted to stop looking into his eyes, big and brown. What is that feeling? She thought. Why do I feel like this, all warm and fuzzy? She would've asked, but decide not to ruin the moment. He said her name, again and again, each time making her feel a little dizzy. She never wanted to stop hearing him say her name, the way it sounded on his lips, sweet and foreign. "Mike." She said. She never wanted to stop saying his name, feeling the taste of it on her lips. She couldn't bear the thought of losing him again...

Finally, Mike racked up the nerve to ask. "Wh-What happened?" Suddenly she stopped smiling, and her gaze dropped to the floor. "Bad..." He instantly regretted his question.

"You know what? Forget I asked. I'm a mouth breather." He pulled her back into a tight hug, but she carried on anyway. "Cold... Black... Alone..." A tear soaked into his shirt. Two tears. Three. She let out a small, muffled sob. "Hey, hey." Mike said soothingly, lying her down before getting next to her, holding her cold hand. Seriously, what is wrong with you? Look what you've done now. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry you had to be there alone for 4 months. I didn't know where you were. I kept looking, but I couldn't find you. Oh I'm gonna kill Will..." Her eyes grew wide with worry, and he could've kicked himself. "Oh, no! It's just an expression, something people say. Exaggerating. I'm not actually going to kill him. I mean I'm gonna get really angry at him. He knew, all this time. He acted like I was crazy, but he knew. And he didn't even tell me. He just left me alone, feeling isolated and insane. You were there for 4 months, all alone in that place, because of him. I could murder him right now. I won't, but I could." El looked into his brown eyes, and shook her head ever so slightly. "Don't." He sighed. "You're right, you're right. He was scared and confused and

thought he was crazy, and without him today I would've never found the gate in time. Besides, you're home now. You're safe." She smiled a small smile, beginning to fall asleep. "Home."

Nancy came down 5 minutes later to check on them, and found them in the fort, asleep, arms wrapped around each other. She smiled to herself. After months of sadness, of loneliness, of torment, of sleepless nights, of grief, of isolation, of unanswered questions, of pain, Mike could finally be happy and have peace. Finally, he was whole and unbroken again...

8. Crazy Times

Summary for the Chapter:

Times are crazy. Revelations are made. Scandals are unearthed.

Notes for the Chapter:

be glad i can be arsed uploading this. copy and pasting from FFN is no fun. (DID I PREDICT MIKE CALLING EL BEAUTIFUL OR)

Hopper was sat in the Wheeler's kitchen, drinking a black coffee, when Nancy came in and pulled over another chair. "So," she said, a slight gleam in her eye "when are you gonna tell her?" He stared at her, confused.

"How-How-How did you know?" She smiled cheekily, like she knew something he didn't. "Oh, it's pretty obvious to me. The government could've picked anyone to find El, but they picked you. You're close to Joyce, and since Joyce thinks of El like a daughter, you turning her in would be betraying her trust. Well, they're the government. If they've been keeping a telekinetic little girl in our own town for 12 years without anyone even having a conspiracy, I'm pretty sure they could've found out that. So why choose you? Because. You're her father. Some drunk bastard over there probably presumed that you'd give her back to them. So you play along, but inside you know that they're never placing a finger on her ever again, when you find her." She sighed. "Theoretically. But you tell me Chief. Tell me what really happened. And no lies."

"I met this woman in a bar about 12 years ago. We got on well and... let's just say I'd had a lot to drink. The next morning, I woke up and she was gone. Bearing in mind that I was married at the time, I went on with my life as if it never happened. Then last November, me and Joyce paid a visit to El's mother, Terry Ives. I recognised the name, but didn't know where from. Then the night Will got back, government picked me up. And... we'll they told me she was my daughter. I mean, I didn't take their word for it. But if she is... well,

shit will be crazy." They both sat silent for a moment.

"You need a DNA test. If she is, you have to tell her. And Mike... I think he wants her to stay here, but it just won't happen. You need to tell him." And though he knew the possibility was high, and he wasn't sure if he was ready for another daughter, the 16-year-old was right. He knew she was.

Nancy shook Mike gently, whispering into his ear. "Mike... Mike... Mike get up... I have to get El cleaned... And Hopper needs to check on your leg. It looks like you hurt it pretty badly." He opened his eyes ever so slightly. "No," he whispered "I want to stay with El." He squeezed her hand, and she smiled in her sleep. Nancy's heart melted in her chest.

"I know. But she needs to get cleaned up and I need to make sure she hasn't hurt herself, okay? Just go to Hopper, and he'll see if you've broken any bones. I won't wake El until you come back." He sighed, but stood up reluctantly. As soon as he put pressure onto his right leg, he cringed in pain. Hopper had to come carry him up the stairs, much to Mike's embarrassment. Nancy just sat down on the couch, watching the little girl sleep peacefully. She couldn't comprehend how such an innocent, helpless looking person could be capable of killing a man (or many) without so much as blinking. But Mike was happy and complete again, all this time having an Eleven shaped hole in his heart that needed to be filled. She was grateful for that.

El opened her eyes slowly, and instantly realised Mike wasn't there. She started to panic, looking around, until she saw Nancy's calming smile beaming at her. "Hey El." She said softly "Mike's gone getting his leg checked out by Hopper. He should be back soon. While we wait, shall we get you cleaned up and into some warm clothes?" Eleven nodded slowly, and the older girl took her hand, carefully guiding her up the basement stairs. Once in the bathroom, Nancy rubbed her down with a damp cloth (not daring to even mention the bath, remembering what she'd been through) and let her get dressed in soft pink pants and a matching top. There was a particularly sore spot on the back of her head, but Nancy assured her it was nothing but a little bump. "It'll hurt for a few days, but you should be fine." She said with a smile. Finally, she was done, and they went back down to the basement where Mike was sat impatiently waiting. "You

said you wouldn't wake her up un- "he stopped, breathless, as he saw Eleven coming down the stairs, looking completely different than she had earlier. A look of confusion and worry crossed her face as he did this. "Pretty?" She whispered. Mike wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her into a warm hug. His reply was quiet and muffled, but Nancy still heard him. "Beautiful."

9. Start Of Something New

Summary for the Chapter:

All is well. All is bright.

Notes for the Chapter:

Please note that Will is 100% gay. Past Katie was a fool. Him dancing with Jennifer Hayes was wlw/mlm solidarity.

"Make sure that little brother of yours has her home by 10." Hopper warned Nancy with a wink. "And tell him no funny business. I don't want my little girl coming home bouncing off the walls because of him." Nancy nodded solemnly, the corners of her mouth turning upwards slightly. "Oh don't worry, chief. Mike will take good care of her. Besides, the others will be there and they can keep their eye on the pair of them."

"Right then. See you later."

Nancy got into the driver's seat, then turned around to look at El in the back seat. Her eyebrows were furrowed, and she had an exasperated look on her face. "He's so embarrassing." She eventually said in despair. Nancy had to stop herself laughing at how much the little girl had changed. Instead she started driving towards her house. "Excited for your date with Mike? She asked. Eleven's flaming cheeks were all the answer she needed. "Thought so."

He couldn't stop pacing around the living room, fiddling with his collar. "Jeez Mike," Dustin said "anyone would think you're nervous for your first official date with your girlfriend." The others laughed while Mike huffed and looked at the floor. "She's not my girlfriend."

"Oh, of course not." Lucas said sarcastically, rolling his eyes. "You just hold hands and hug each other and suck face." Mike snapped back at him.

"We do not suck face." It was true. He and El hadn't kissed since last

November, which the boys didn't know about. Sure, they held hands a lot, but that was just to comfort her, right? She'd been through torture, escaped, disappeared to nothingness, then got back. Mike knew she was still in shock (any out of place sounds, men in suits and baths made her cry or scream) and made it his job to be there, protecting her. But that didn't mean she liked him back, right? He was snapped out of his thoughts when he saw El walking down the stairs. She was wearing a pale blue dress, and her now shoulder length, mouse brown hair was curled lightly at the ends. She looked beautiful. Dustin leaned over and whispered in Mike's ear. "If she's not your girlfriend, then you won't mind me having the first dance with her." He said, earning himself an elbow to the stomach. Nancy rolled her eyes, enjoying the chance she'd been given to make fun of Mike. "Jeez Mike. Didn't mom teach you that it's not nice to stare." Both El and him looked to the floor, their cheeks flushed. Nancy laughed. "Come on. You guys don't want to be late, do you?" Instantly, Lucas, Dustin and Will ran out the house to the car, dragging El behind them. Mike glared at Nancy. "What?" he said.

"Oh, right." She smiled cheekily "The chief wants her home by 10. And no 'funny business'." Mike rolled his eyes and went to join the others in the car.

When they all arrived at the school dance, the hall was already packed. "Come on, Dustin." El said, dragging him to dance to the fast song that was playing. He laughed and went along with her. Lucas turned to Mike, who looked miserable, and tried (and failed) to stifle a laugh. "God Mike, your girlfriend chose Dustin over you. That's got to hurt." Mike glared at him angrily. "She's not my girlfriend." He mumbled, and walked off to the snack table.

Hours passed, and Mike still hadn't had a chance to dance with El alone. Every time he went to make a move, she made Dustin or Lucas or all four of them (when Will wasn't dancing with Jennifer Hayes) dance with her, and the others happily went along, grinning at the look on Mike's face. It was nearing the end, and the final song (a slow dance that all the couples in the room were dancing to) was playing. Mike was getting punch when one of the cups started to float ever so slightly. He turned around to see El, smiling shyly at him, a little bit of blood running from her left nostril. She quickly wiped it away,

then held out her hand. "Dance with me?" she asked. Mike smiled a grin that was sure to meet behind his head, and nodded. "I thought you'd never ask." They walked to the dance floor, almost exactly where the bath had been last November, and El wrapped her arms around his neck, her nose in his chest. They swayed for a while, then eventually looked at each other. "Sorry I didn't dance with you." She said meekly "Nancy told me not to until the last song." Mike rolled his eyes. Of course it was Nancy. He could almost picture her laughing at him now. "It's okay." He said. "El... I love you." And then they were kissing, the rest of the world slipping away. This time, El seemed to know exactly what to do. They were brought back to reality with the sound of Dustin Lucas and Will cheering and high-fiving. Embarrassed, they walked towards them, ready to go. Dustin slapped Mike on the back. "Well done, buddy. Getting your first kiss before the rest of us." Mike squeezed El's hand, which was still entwined in his. "Second." He said, smiling. The others stopped, looking at each other in confusion, then ran forwards to catch up with them. "Seriously?" Will shouted.

"Since when?" Lucas cried. El smiled back at Mike, wanting to hug him for the rest of eternity (although she didn't have the word for it yet), and answered them quietly, although they still heard her, straining their ears. "November."

Author's Note:

A/N Thank you so much for reading. This chapter is really short, but I promise they get a lot longer. It's my first time writing anything like this so ALL CRITICISM IS ACCEPTED (but no hate guys.)

Clarification: If I owned Stranger Things in any way shape or form, why would I be writing FanFiction about it?